

Safe Boating

Many Air Force members and their dependents are killed or seriously injured in boating mishaps every year. The majority of accidents would not have happened if the victims had taken time to learn proper small boat operating procedures.

If small boat enthusiasts observe the following rules, they will be nautical miles ahead in personal fun and safety.

1. Know your boat - what it can and can't do.
2. Don't overload - check the boat manufacturer's capacity plate.
3. Keep a good lookout and situational awareness of other boats and objects.
4. Operate at safe and legal speeds - watch your wake.
5. Know and respect the weather - heed weather warnings.
6. Take sufficient fuel - in proper containers - know your cruising radius.
7. Keep your boat shipshape, check safety equipment.
8. Take necessary equipment fire extinguishers, personal flotation devices.
9. Secure the boat properly stow loose objects.
10. Learn boating laws and obey them.
11. Never operate a boat while intoxicated.

All "boaters are encouraged to take part in formal small boat training programs offered by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. You may contact the Coast Guard Auxiliary for classes, boat inspections, and other safety guidance at 255- 0042.



Drinking Afloat More Dangerous Than Driving

Research has shown that as little as four hours' exposure to sun, wind, glare, vibration, and other motion on the water produces "boater's hypnosis," a kind of fatigue that slows reaction time almost as much as if a person were drunk.

Alcohol can affect your judgement, motor skills, peripheral vision, depth perception, night vision, and balance. A "tipsy" person on an unstable, moving platform like a boat runs the risk of slipping on deck, stumbling down a gangway, or falling overboard. In the event of a fall overboard, alcohol may increase risk of cardiac arrest and will certainly reduce your body's ability to stay warm in cold water. It is a well-established fact that with the very first drink, brain functions are depressed. That's why boaters should think *before* they drink.